

Equipoise

By

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FADE.IN

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A large monitor sits on a table with 4 blank screens in a video chatroom. We close in to see STEVE, early 20's, streetwise and cocky join the room. ROGER, 35, well groomed and educated, enters the room, his name under his image.

ROGER

Hi Steve

STEVE

Sup bro.

ROGER

Sorry?

STEVE

How you doin'?

ROGER

Oh OK, pretty good.

STEVE

Not many bout tonight.

ROGER

I've only just come on, I only use the four people option anyway.

STEVE

Same bruv, it's too much with more.

HOORAIN, late 20's wearing a Muslim headscarf enters the room.

STEVE

Ere we go.

HOORAIN

Hello Steve, how are you?

STEVE

Whatever.

Hoorain's brow furrows and is a bit taken aback by Steve's response. Roger's eyes widen with surprise not understanding Steve's reaction and is quick to jump in.

ROGER
Hi Hoorain, how are you this evening?

HOORAIN
I'm good Roger. Still trying to adjust.

ROGER
Aren't we all.

STEVE
Can't even get any blow.

HOORAIN
There's more to worry about than not being able to get drugs.

STEVE
Whatever bruv.

HOORAIN
What is your problem and I'm not your bruv.

STEVE
Shut up, go and face, wherever you do to pray.

HOORAIN
Mecca.

STEVE
Bingo?

HOORAIN
We face Mecca when saying prayer.

ROGER
(laughing)
Bingo, are you serious Steve?

STEVE
I fought Mecca was bingo.

ROGER
Well it... don't worry about it.

EDITH, late 80's, grey hair and very aged skin, enters taking the last place in the room.

HOORAIN
Hello Edith.

ROGER
Hi Edith.

EDITH
Hello everyone.

STEVE
Alright Granny.

HOORAIN
You're so rude Steve.

EDITH
That's OK, I am a Granny.

STEVE
(Emphasising saying her name wrong)
Yeah so shut up Lorraine.

The awkward silence is broken by Roger.

ROGER
What do you do for a living Hoorain?

HOORAIN
Did do.

STEVE
You know what he means.

HOORAIN
Yes I do thank you Steve because I
actually have more then one brain
cell.

ROGER
Touché.

STEVE
What are you, a turtle?

ROGER
Oh please Steve do stop being so
silly.

STEVE
Soz Rog, didn't realise you were in
charge.

HOORAIN
I was, am, a dentist, how about you?

ROGER
Entrepreneur. I made a lot of money
from the internet back in the day.

STEVE
Porn?

ROGER
Actually Steve, yes.

EDITH
(smiling)
Me too.

HOORAIN
Edith!

EDITH
I wasn't always an old woman.

ROGER
I promoted sites, behind the scenes
stuff.

EDITH
I definitely wasn't behind the scenes.

Hoorain's smile turns to laughter as Edith confesses.

HOORAIN
Good on you Edith.

Steve makes a circle with the thumb and index finger on his
left hand and pushes the index finger of his right hand in
and out.

STEVE
GILF.

ROGER
How about some respect Steve.

STEVE
How bout you shut up bruv.

ROGER
What about you Steve?

STEVE
Ain't had a job since school. Feel
like I've been in this flat forever.

Roger uses this information to belittle Steve and impress Hoorain.

ROGER

I've always worked, that's how I can drive a car that is worth more than your flat.

HOORAIN

(Sarcastically)

Nice one Roger, very impressive.

Steve lowers his head as Roger mocks him, as he lifts his head his eyes are welling up.

STEVE

Ain't like I didn't wanna work. I wanted to be a photographer, could have done it but...

ROGER

(Interrupting)

You couldn't be bothered?

STEVE

No, my... don't worry bruv.

HOORAIN

Come on Steve, it's good to talk.

STEVE

Why do you care?

HOORAIN

We are all here for the same reason, we need company, we need someone to talk to.

STEVE

Dad died when I was 6 so it was just me and me Mum. She got sick and I had to care for her.

HOORAIN

Sorry to hear that.

STEVE

I had no life but she looked after me all those years what else could I do.

ROGER

You could have got a job and paid someone to care for her.

HOORAIN

It's not all about money.

Roger's puzzled expression speaks volumes.

STEVE

I was there for her until the end and wouldn't have had it any other way.

HOORAIN

Good for you Steve.

STEVE

Isolation don't feel different for me, it's just more lonely now Mum's gone.

Hoorain gives Steve a comforting smile as he wipes tears from his eyes.

ROGER

You're not saying much Edith.

EDITH

I'm listening.

ROGER

My Mother left me when she and my Father separated. We had nothing and I knew I didn't want to live like that.

HOORAIN

Like what?

ROGER

Poor.

STEVE

That so bad?

ROGER

You live in a flat, I have properties in 4 countries including a substantial property in the states.

STEVE

Money but no Mum, I had no money but had me Mum.

EDITH

I lived a long and fruitful life, I've done many things including experiencing wealth and poverty...

I've lived without food, well not much of it. My Father would come home from work, he was fed first, us kids got whatever was left.

Hoorain, Roger and Steve listen intently.

EDITH

Hoorain, you are obviously an educated woman . You've worked hard to get qualified and establish yourself...

Roger, you have money and it seems a lot of it. You've worked hard to have nice things, expensive cars etc.

Roger nods in agreement as Edith continues.

EDITH

Steve, you come across as rough and quite rude. You are obviously a sensitive and caring young man, your Mother would be proud.

STEVE

Thanks.

EDITH

What does all this mean, does this make you or I better than anyone else? Are you better than Steve Roger just because you have money? You have 4 properties, you can only live in one at a time and can't even visit any of the others at this moment in time...

Doesn't matter how much money you have if there is nothing to spend it on, money cannot produce bread from thin air.

STEVE

True dat.

EDITH

We are all people, no matter where we are from or what we have. We are all the same when it comes down to it. We are all here, all alone, all isolated.

HOORAIN

You are so right Edith.

EDITH

We need each other, no matter our age, race or religion. It's not about our financial situation or how far up the corporate ladder we have climbed.

STEVE

I'm sorry for my attitude Hoorain.

HOORAIN

You don't need to apologise.

STEVE

I want to.

HOORAIN

Accepted.

EDITH

It's about being here for each other, even if it's just on a screen. Someone to talk to, share with, spend some time with so we don't feel so alone...

This is a time to reflect on what is important in life and to realise that no matter what we have, it can be taken from us in an instant...

I don't have much time left but you are all young. Life will never be the same again but you will adapt and grow, not just you but the entire human race. The world is a different place but that doesn't mean it can't be a better place. I hope lessons are learned.

ROGER

You are a wise woman Edith and I hope you are right.

EDITH

It's been a pleasure listening to you all this evening. I hope we can meet again and who knows one day we may even be able to meet in person.

STEVE

I would like that Edith.

HOORAIN

Definitely.

ROGER

Absolutley.

EDITH

I'll be here tomorrow from eight. Hope to see you all then. Night night, sleep tight and don't let the bed bugs bite.

HOORAIN

Night Edith, Steve and Roger.

STEVE

Laters gators.

ROGER

See you all tomorrow, look forward to it.

Edith's window shuts down and goes to black, followed by Roger's.

STEVE

Night Hoorain.

HOORAIN

Stay safe Steve.

Hoorain's window goes black as she logs off. Steve smiles.

FADE.OUT